CELEBRATING OUR PEOPLE
Our people have been at the heart of everything we achieve. Responding to the demands of our customers, embracing innovation and adopting new techniques, committed individuals and teams have created and brought to market an amazing range of products and transformed consumers’ lives beyond all recognition. Every day food scientists, engineers, marketeers, logistics experts and many others strive to get great value, top quality products on to retailers’ shelves.

This publication tells some of those stories, shows how important skilled and talented people are to the future success and brings to life the rewarding careers that are available in food and drink manufacturing.

Looking to the future, to realise our 2020 vision to deliver significant, shared and sustainable growth will require us to grow our exports, invest innovation but above all else have the best people with the right skills. Our work to encourage young people to consider food and drink as a career of first choice, to increase the numbers and the quality of our apprenticeships and to develop the UK’s first ever food engineering degree and a centre of excellence at Sheffield Hallam will help to create that pipeline of talent.

My own career in food started in 1976 and I am proud to have worked in some of the many different sectors which make up this vibrant industry. Throughout that time I have been lucky enough to work with great people whose stories aren’t too different from those you’ll read in this publication and who have made this industry what it is - A Great British success story.
I started working for Mondelēz International in August 2012 as an Engineering Apprentice and haven’t looked back since.

For the first year of my apprenticeship I attended Birmingham Metropolitan College five days a week. During this period I developed a diverse set of skills, some of which included problem solving, operating machinery and electrical principles. These skills have helped me progress personally as well as professionally; during my studies I not only learnt about the engineering process but also interacted with like-minded students.

I decided to join the food and drink industry because of the vast range of tasks and opportunities available, which suited my personality and my ambitions. It is also a sustainable industry - everyone needs food and drink and as a result I feel that it offers a secure and reliable future.

To further my knowledge I have also enrolled on a level three B-Tec qualification which will enable me to gain all of the necessary skills needed to become an engineer.

One of the main benefits of being an apprentice is the balance between work and college – you are immediately given the opportunity to put the theoretical learnings into practice and that makes the experience even more enjoyable.

If you enjoy problem-solving, working as part of a team and facing new challenges, then I would definitely recommend getting involved in food and drink engineering. There is always something new to learn and experience.

I've always been drawn towards a more practical, hands-on career. At school I enjoyed subjects such as technical studies and product design and I realised that engineering would be a career which matched my interests and skills.

I have recently completed my Modern Apprenticeship which has enabled me to combine classroom learning with the on-the-job training, effectively getting paid to learn!

I now hold a National Certificate in Electrics, Electronics and Maintenance. In the future I will be undertaking my Higher National Qualification and after that I hope to complete my Higher National Diploma to further my skills set.

I thoroughly enjoy the variety that food and drink manufacturing brings, as every day is different and brings new challenges and experiences to deal with.

When I told my friends that I was planning on undertaking an apprenticeship in engineering, they assumed that it was a male-dominated career and questioned why I would want to do that for a living.

My advice to other young people choosing their careers is to believe in yourself and your choices and not to think of any career path as gender specific. Now that the people who doubted my choice see how much I love my job they realise that I made the right decision.

I say to young people at school, keep an open mind and don’t disregard anything at first look. Do your research, pin point where your skills and strengths lie, find out what you enjoy and base your decisions on that.

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**BE YOUR OWN BOSS**

**FROM A YOUNG AGE I’VE ALWAYS HAD A PASSION FOR COOKING EITHER SAVOURY OR SWEET DISHES. I WAS DIAGNOSED WITH DYSLEXIA AT A YOUNG AGE AND COOKING WAS ALWAYS MY RELEASE, SO TO KEEP ME BUSY I WAS ALWAYS IN THE KITCHEN.**

The food and drink industry is really exciting and rewarding. I’ve always had a strong interest in the industry and I’m so happy that I get to do something that I’m really passionate about. The best thing about this industry is that it is always changing, and that’s what excites me; there are new trends all the time and we experiment with new flavours and techniques to respond to changing tastes. Last year, the renowned chocolate manufacturer Callebaut appointed me as one of its world ambassadors which is something I am proud of, but above any achievement, I am most proud of the letters I receive from young people across the country who are inspired by my journey.

**START-UP SUCCESS**

**NAME: MARIA WHITEHEAD MBE**

**JOB ROLE: DIRECTOR**

**COMPANY: HAWKESHEAD RELISH COMPANY**

I HAVE WORKED IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY SINCE 1984, THOUGH OUR BUSINESS REALLY STARTED IN 1994, THAT WAS THE YEAR MY HUSBAND AND I TOOK OVER THE RUNNING OF A BUSY CAFE, GIVING US THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE OUR OWN HOME COOKED SAUCES, PRESERVES, RELISHES AND PICKLES - ALL MADE USING LOCALLY SOURCED INGREDIENTS.

In 2001, following an increased interest in our preserves and jams, we decided to sell our products through retail outlets across the country and this saw the birth of Hawkshead Relish Company. Our products are now stocked in 350 retailers.

Since establishing Hawkshead Relish Company it has successfully grown producing up to 120 unique flavoured relishes, pickles and preserves without using any artificial flavourings, colourings or preservatives.

**Setting up your own small or medium sized manufacturing company within an industry you are passionate about is extremely exciting to say the least. My role is really varied and involves being front of house, finance, running the accounts, payroll and marketing.**

My husband, Mark, is a trained hotelier and chef who manages the practical side of the business and the logistics. By combining skills and working together we ensure the smooth running of our business.

I love working in a field which brings pleasure to so many people and it has never been a chore. We are constantly working on new products, moving the business forward with new marketing ideas and this constant change is what keeps the work interesting, making every day a challenge. When both Mark and I were awarded MBEs for our services to the food industry in Cumbria. When you are working hard to build a small business and remain true to your ethics, beliefs and helping others to achieve their goals along the way, it was both a shock and humbling to be recognised for it.

Going from having no formal training to running a successful SME in a rural landscape has been an interesting career path. I believe that people with a mixture of ability and drive can achieve real success in food and drink and I can’t think of a better industry to be in.

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After studying geography at university I joined Premier Foods in 2001 as part of its supply chain graduate recruitment programme and spent time working in the procurement, operations and production planning teams. Coupled with working in the procurement, operations and production planning course, these first 18 months gave me a great foundation for things to come.

Having completed the Graduate scheme, I became Planning Manager at one of our factories and, over the next few years, I worked at different sites in IT and Logistics before becoming Head of Supply Planning in 2007. In 2010 I took on our Sales Forecasting and Stock Health teams, becoming Supply Chain Planning Director for our Grocery division.

I was delighted to be invited onto our Leadership Development Programme and I believe that the experience was pivotal to me gaining my present role. The course was a huge confidence booster and provided me with many of the skills I now use every day to lead my team.

Premier Foods is a fast paced, transforming business. If you are driven, thrive in a changing environment and are enthusiastic, you can really progress.

I am now a member of the senior leadership team and in my current role as Customer Service & Planning Director I get to work cross functionally between our Commercial and Supply Chain teams. No two days are the same and I can honestly say that I love my job!

It was never my plan to join the food and drinks industry. I was impressed by the Premier Foods graduate training programme and decided to give it a try. I now have a career that is going from strength to strength and I would recommend the industry to others looking to put their first step on their career ladder.

My proudest achievement in my working life so far is when I was offered my current role as Customer Service & Planning Director at Premier Foods. I get a huge amount of satisfaction from leading and working with a great team of people, supporting their personal growth and development whilst driving significant business benefits.

My advice to young people is that they should be open-minded about starting a career in the food and drinks sector. The opportunities available are very diverse, ranging from procurement, engineering, nutrition, marketing and logistics to name but a few areas where you might find yourself working. It’s a fast moving working environment which makes it exciting and rewarding.

My theoretical learning into practice, whilst working on various fabrication projects. During my first year at Jus-Rol, I also completed an NVQ introduction of the highest, state-of-the-art automation at the Berwick site.

I have enjoyed every minute of working for General Mills, especially because you are exposed to a variety of different roles and experiences. I have also built new friendships and had the opportunity to learn from my colleagues around the globe.

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I left school with 10 'O' levels and 'A' levels in Maths, Chemistry and Physics. This mix of science topics led to my choice of degree: a BSc (Hons) in Chemical Engineering.

I have been with the food industry for almost 30 years, starting in September 1983. I came to KP as a Supervisor following on from my career in technical functions at British Gypsum and Denby Pottery.

During my first role as Production Supervisor I saw something in the people that was quite special. They really like what they do and they feel a great sense of pride in the workplace and with the products – this for me was extremely rewarding.

Following a slight detour to McVitie's, I came back to KP in a senior manufacturing position. My role in manufacturing was probably the most rewarding. No two shifts or days are the same and the unpredictability means you are always alert and trying to stay one step ahead. The team mentality is key and nurturing the commitment of individuals brings its rewards.

I have spent the last six years in the role of Process and Packaging Development Manager. The diversity of interactions with a variety of different teams e.g. the New Product Development team, Brand Managers and Central packaging and engineering are all daily events in my work. Making sure that the site supports all manner demands such as health and nutrition regulations, looking after customer visits, and leading my team to deliver continuous improvement in our materials and plant/machinery performance are critical. I use my years of experience to help and guide the 'new brigade' through their approach to problem solving and importantly give the spark back that was ignited in me all those years ago!

I will retire in the next few months with a feeling of pride in what I have achieved. I will continue to preach the virtues of working at KP Snacks and in an industry that provides the platform to express yourself and share in the joy of producing products that people enjoy!
“I ALWAYS KNEW THAT I WANTED TO BE AN ENGINEER AND THE FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRY GAVE ME OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN LOTS OF SKILLS AND TO WORK WITH MY HANDS. AS AN ENGINEER, IT’S THE HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES THAT ARE THE MOST ENJOYABLE”

GEORGE:
I started working at Unilever in 1975 when I became an Engineering Apprentice at our Gloucester ice cream factory at the age of 16. Aside from a short secondment, I’ve been based at Gloucester ever since, which is almost 40 years.

Having worked my way up, today I am the site’s Mix Manager which means I’m responsible for the Mix Department where we process ingredients to supply our lines with raw mix to make 160m litres of ice cream every year. At the Wall’s factory, amongst others we manufacture Magnum, Carte D’Or, Twister, Solero, Feast and Viennetta among others we manufacture Magnum, Carte D’Or, Twister, Solero, Feast and Viennetta.

I always knew that I wanted to be an engineer and the food and drink industry gave me opportunity to learn lots of skills and to work with my hands. As an engineer, it’s the hands-on experiences that are the most enjoyable.

TOM:
Over the years I’ve seen manufacturing evolve in a way that is really exciting for an engineer. Previously labour intensive lines had been automated, producing greater volumes with fewer hands on deck. Being involved in these projects has been very rewarding.

There have been many proud moments but perhaps the proudest was being part of the team which automated the Viennetta line more around 10 years ago. We transformed the line from 120 pieces per minute with 23 operators, to 200 pieces/minute with six operators – a real engineering achievement.

Of course another proud moment for me personally was when Tom secured his apprenticeship with Unilever. As his father, I would support him in any career path but to see him join a company which I know and for which I’ve worked for almost 40 years made me very proud.

SANDRA:
I started with the company in 1976. I have been in a number of roles over the years and at present I’m with Production Services. My role is to provide the plants with ingredients for production. We also work with the bulk ingredients by off-loading the tankers.

I was immediately drawn to the idea of joining the industry when I was at school - I was lucky enough to have a week’s work experience and really enjoyed it. It was a real eye opener for me as I learnt more about the manufacturing process and how interesting it can be – it was then I realised that the food industry was the best place for me.

Over the years, I have seen new machinery, new ways of working, and new products. Seeing the industry evolve has been hugely exciting.

Whilst there have many proud moments, including my years of service to United Biscuits, I am most proud to be part of a business and industry that my children and extended family are part of too.

DEAN:
When I started at United Biscuits ten years ago it was something that I fell in to but I’ve never looked back. I started out as a packing operator, a role which has changed throughout my time here as I was given increasing amounts of responsibility. I always look to get involved in any opportunities that come my way and make the most of them.

So when I had a chance to take on the role of process operator, ensuring that our products are made to the correct specifications and quality, I jumped at it.

DEAN:
I am still at university in full-time education but because my family work here I knew it would be a good place for a student to work part-time. When a job came up as a machine operator I went for it. I would definitely recommend the industry as a good career stepping stone for young people, there are a number of opportunities, it really is an interesting place to be and it’s great to work with my family!

WHilst ThErE hAve many PRoUd mOmEnts, i nClUdIng my YeaRs of serviCe to unItEd bIsCuits, i am mOst prOuD to be part of a business and industry that my children and extended family are part of too.”

Sandra Mohan
**KEY FACTS**

**THE UK FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRY IS A GREAT BRITISH SUCCESS STORY**

- Food and drink is the largest manufacturing sector in the UK with a turnover of £76bn contributing £20.6bn in Gross Value Added to the UK economy.
- We have continued to grow throughout the economic downturn.
- We are the key link in a world-class highly efficient food chain.
- We buy 2/3 of what UK farmers produce.
- Exports of food and non-alcoholic drink exports were stable at £12.1bn in 2012 – the same as 2011

**OUR PEOPLE**

- We employ up to 400,000 people right across the UK.
- We recruit at all levels from school leavers with few or no qualifications right through to highly qualified postgraduates.
- 38% of those working in food manufacturing are qualified to A-Level or above. 20% are educated to degree level
- 94% of employees are full time

**OUR COMMITMENT TO BUILDING THE SKILLS AGENDA**

- FDF has devised its own skills campaign; Taste Success – A future in Food. Taste Success is our industry-led campaign to attract new talent to UK food and drink manufacturing.
- The campaign engages with young people via various channels including online, to bust the myths about food and drink manufacturing and raise awareness of the good career prospects in the sector has to offer.
- FDF smashed its pledge to double the number of apprenticeships available in the food and drink manufacturing sector in England and Scotland by the end of 2012 by quadrupling the number offered across the sector between August 2011 and December 2012.
- We are now working to develop the next phase of our new pledge, focused on the standard and quality of Apprenticeships, and the number of higher-level apprenticeships taken up.
- In partnership with the National Skills Academy (NSA) for food and drink and Sheffield Hallam University (SHU), FDF has launched a new engineering degree course, MEng to equip graduates with the technical skills and knowledge that the food and drink manufacturing industry requires.
The Food and Drink Federation is the voice of the UK food and drink industry, the largest manufacturing sector in the country. Our sector directly employs up to 400,000 people, and as many as 1.2 million in ancillary services; it accounts for 16% of the UK’s total manufacturing sector by value; and it is an invaluable partner to British agriculture, buying two thirds of what farmers produce.

Our membership comprises manufacturers of all sizes as well as trade associations dealing with specific sectors of the industry. In representing the interests of our members, we focus on the following core priorities:

• Food Safety and Science
• Health and Wellbeing
• Sustainability
• Competitiveness